REMARKS

After the forgoing amendment, claims 31-46 are currently pending in this application. Claims 46-128 have been canceled without prejudice. Claim 46 has been amended.

Claims 31 and 39 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of non-statutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 21 of U.S. Patent No. 5,841,768. Applicant is willing to submit a terminal disclaimer if the application is otherwise deemed allowable to overcome this rejection.

Claims 31 and 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention. In view of the claim amendments, this rejection is now moot.

Claims 31-37 and 39-45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,590,889 to Preuss (hereinafter "Preuss") in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2004/0005020 to Dent (hereinafter "Dent").

Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's use of Dent as prior art. The present patent application claims priority at least to U.S. Patent No. 5,799,010 (U.S. Application No. 08/669,775) filed on June 27, 1996. Please note that Dent claims priority to U.S. Patent No. 6,625,200 filed on January 25, 1999. Accordingly, applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn.

If the Examiner believes that any additional minor formal matters need to be addressed in order to place this application in condition for allowance, or that a telephone interview will help to materially advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone at the Examiner's convenience.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present application, including claims 31-46, is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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